

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
'Socialism on Trial' — A communist program for workers' struggles
— PAGES 8-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 8 MARCH 3, 2014

'Militant' renewal drive off to good start

BY EMMA JOHNSON

After the first week, the international campaign to win 575 renewals and long-term subscriptions to the *Militant* is on schedule.

Supporters have begun knocking on doors of the 2,975 people who subscribed during last fall's drive, discussing the paper's coverage of politics from the point of view of the working class.

Supporters report a good percentage of those they talk to are interested in continuing to receive the paper, but need to set an appointment for a later date when they have the money to renew. Some want to sit down when they have time to discuss the fight to defend the Cuban Five or other political questions.

So it will take more than one visit to reach those who are interested. For this reason, the drive has been extended to six weeks, through March 23.

"We signed up seven readers to renew their subscriptions this past

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End solitary confinement! demand Calif. protesters

Speakers at state hearing back prisoners' fight



Militant/Betsey Stone

Supporters of California prisoners who held hunger strike last year protest after legislative hearing in Sacramento Feb. 11. Some 12,000 prisoners in the state are in solitary confinement.

BY BETSEY STONE

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Supporters of the more than 30,000 California prisoners who were on a hunger strike last summer demanding an end to solitary confinement and

prison abuses packed a state legislative hearing here Feb. 11.

About 200 people attended the hearing. Dozens of prisoners' family members and others lined up to urge an end to solitary confinement of some 12,000 prisoners in California, including at least 3,000 in the notori-

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Back fight against solitary confinement!

— editorial p. 11

'Productivity' up, real wages down, workers pay for capitalist crisis

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Squeezed by the deepening crisis of capitalist production and trade worldwide, U.S. bosses are taking it out on the working class, seeking to keep their workforce lean, boost productivity, and drive down wages and social benefits workers have won through previous struggles.

Wages were stagnant in 2013, rising only 0.4 percent after inflation, the *New York Times* reported Feb. 8.

Official government inflation figures, however, don't accurately reflect the impact of price rises on working people. Costs for food, gas, rent and other basic necessities that eat up the big majority of workers' income are running higher than the so-called Consumer Price Index.

Between 2007 and 2012, household incomes fell for five straight years, the *Wall Street Journal* reported Feb. 7. Today incomes are 6.4 percent below 2007, "and — remarkably — 4.7 percent below the level at the end of the

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Puerto Rico: Soaring debt, social crisis hit US colony

BY SETH GALINSKY

Puerto Rico's position as a colony of U.S. imperialism is magnifying the effects of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis there, as bondholders seek to squeeze more profits from the island, increasing the burden on workers and farmers.

Billions of dollars are being sucked from the island to service Puerto Rico's soaring debts to bondholders abroad. Industrial jobs tumbled from 160,000 to 75,000 between 1996 and 2013, with a 30 percent decline over the past seven years.

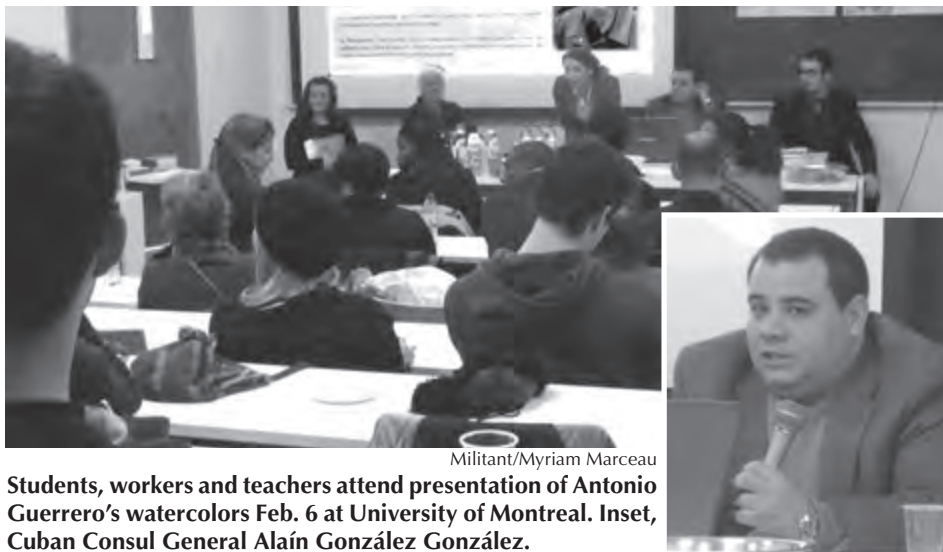
With an official unemployment rate of 14.2 percent — more than double U.S. figures — Puerto Ricans, both workers and middle-class professionals, are fleeing the island in increasing numbers, the largest emigration since the 1950s when 470,000 people moved to the U.S.

Conditions of life for those who remain are deteriorating, from broken highway lighting to schools without computers, air conditioning or copy machines.

Standard & Poor's lowered its rat-

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Exhibit of paintings by one of Cuban Five opens in Montreal



Militant/Myriam Marceau

Students, workers and teachers attend presentation of Antonio Guerrero's watercolors Feb. 6 at University of Montreal. Inset, Cuban Consul General Alain González González.

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO AND PHILIPPE TESSIER

MONTREAL — Some 50 students, workers and teachers attended a presentation of Antonio Guerrero's series of 15 watercolors — "I Will Die the Way I've Lived" — at the University of Montreal Feb. 6. After the program, the paintings went on display at the Intermed, the medical students' coffee shop at the University of Montreal, from Feb. 10-21.

Guerrero is one of five Cuban revolutionaries arrested in 1998 on frame-up charges, including conspiracy to

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'Militant' Renewal Drive Feb. 8 - March 23 (week 1)			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Lincoln	5	2	40%
Miami	20	7	35%
San Francisco	40	14	35%
Atlanta	35	10	29%
Des Moines	30	8	27%
Chicago	37	8	22%
Seattle	37	8	22%
Boston	13	2	15%
Omaha	30	4	13%
New York	90	9	10%
Los Angeles	35	1	3%
Twin Cities	35	1	3%
Philadelphia	30	0	0%
Washington	18	0	0%
Houston	-	6	-
Total U.S.	455	80	18%
PRISONERS	8	4	50%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	30	6	20%
Manchester	20	4	20%
UK Total	50	10	20%
CANADA	32	4	13%
NEW ZEALAND	18	0	0%
AUSTRALIA	20	5	25%
Total	583	103	18%
Should be	575	96	17%

Textile workers in Egypt strike over back pay, national wage

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Nearly 20,000 textile workers in Egypt are on strike as of Feb. 17, the eighth day of a walkout that began when some 12,000 workers at Mahalla Weaving and Textile Co., the country’s largest textile plant, struck over back pay and wage demands.

Like many workers in Egypt, pay is divided between regular wages and a system of bonus payments. The latter is often deferred and sometimes withheld altogether.

A decision by the government to disburse the overdue bonus payments after the second day of the strike was rejected by the workers in Mahalla because it did not address their demand for a raise in the minimum wage.

“About a month ago we formed the Free Union of Textile Workers in Mahalla to help in this fight. Our new union is actively participating in these mobilizations,” said Kamal Fayoumy, a leader of the textile workers in Mahalla, in a phone interview Feb. 14.

“We are also demanding the removal of the company’s director, Fouad Abdel-Alim, the establishment of an administrative board to run the company, investment of funds for the purchase of cotton, and payment of the minimum wage to the Mahalla workers, at other textile mills and to other workers as well,” he said.

Mahalla textile workers are demanding that a new monthly minimum wage of 1,200 Egyptian pounds (\$170) promised by the government to go into effect early this year for certain public workers be implemented

immediately and applied to all workers employed by the government and the enterprises it runs. The government owns many factories, like those in the textile industry.

Since the workers at Mahalla began their strike, workers at Zefteh Textile, Tanta Spinning and several other plants have joined the walkout.

For years, Mahalla textile workers have been in the forefront of the fight for a higher minimum wage. They first raised the demand in mass protests against President Hosni Mubarak’s regime in 2008. Demonstrations later swept throughout the country in 2011 that forced the ouster of the hated dictator.

The Egyptian rulers are turning the screws on the working class in face of an acute economic crisis. According to workers in Mahalla the *Militant* interviewed while on a reporting trip to Egypt last month, the mill is operating at very low capacity and layoffs have been frequent.

“The demand for funds to purchase cotton is also central for us,” said Fayoumy in the recent interview. “Right now production in the plant is down to 40 percent of capacity due to lack of cotton. We want production back up at 100 percent and the companies should buy the cotton needed.

“We do not want a protracted strike. We want to go back to work and all the machines to run, but it is necessary for the demands of the workers to be met.”

Georges Mehrabian contributed to this article.



Textile workers now on strike in Mahalla, Egypt, have been at forefront of workers’ struggles in country. Top, recent strike by workers at Mahalla Weaving and Textile Co. Bottom, 2008 protest in Mahalla demanding ouster of President Hosni Mubarak and higher minimum wage.

‘Blood money’ put to good use for working class

“Workers in the Chicago area recently dropped off blood money totaling \$228.32 at the Socialist Workers Party branch to put it to good use for the working class,” reported Laura Anderson.

Michael Barry, Charlie Brown, John Hawkins, Alyson Kennedy and Anderson donated \$10 each, the value of Jewel-Osco cards that bosses at Caterpillar-owned Electro-Motive Diesel in Lagrange, Ill., handed out as a holiday bonus.

By “blood money” Anderson is referring to so-called bonuses and other bribes bosses use to press us to accept wage cuts, speedup, dangerous working conditions and concession contracts. Donations of such bribes form a pillar of the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund, which finances long-range work of the party.

Betsy Farley, a member of United Steelworkers Local 1010 at the Arcelor-Mittal Indiana Harbor steel mill in East Chicago, donated \$18.32 for a ham she received as a holiday bonus. Ilona Gersh and Leroy Watson, members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers local at Saint Gobain glass container factory, gave \$30 each for the hams they received. Harvey McArthur, a CNC lathe operator at a small tool-and-die-making shop in St. Charles, Ill., gave his end-of-the-year bonus of \$100.

To make a donation, contact Militant distributors listed on page 6.

— EMMA JOHNSON

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

THE MILITANT

Support workers’ struggles from Sarajevo to Kiev

From Sarajevo to Kiev to Moscow, working people have been taking to the streets against governments representing the interests of rising capitalist classes. The ‘Militant’ covers workers’ struggles today opened by the collapse of Stalinist tyrannies there.



Reuters/Antonio Bronic
Protest against layoffs and corruption in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Feb. 9.

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‘Militant’ renewal drive

Continued from front page

week,” reported Laura Anderson from Chicago Feb. 16. “We also visited the Workers United union hall to promote the upcoming showing of Antonio Guerrero’s watercolors.” (See ad on page 7.)

“I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived,” an exhibition of prison paintings by Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five, will be shown at the Beverly Arts Center on the city’s South Side for three weeks, starting March 21.

“At the union hall we ran into Herlinda Hernandez, a member of Service Employees International Union and a supporter of the Cuban Five,” Anderson wrote.

Hernandez renewed her subscription for three months and got *Voices from Prison: The Cuban Five* and *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*. These two books, just published by Pathfinder Press, are new tools in the fight to free the Five and help involve *Militant* readers in organizing showings of Guerrero’s paintings.

“We invite readers to join us to attend

the exhibition and to walk the picket line in Dixon, Ill., where food workers are on strike,” Anderson said. “We invite them to the Militant Labor Forums.”

“Charlie Brown, one of my coworkers and a long-term reader, organized to get a renewal slip to Tim, another coworker, who is an electrician,” wrote Anderson, who works at Electro-Motive Diesel in La Grange, Ill. “The next day Tim came by saying, ‘It’s that time, here’s the money.’ He shares the paper with others to read on breaks.”

Miami: ‘Off to a good start’

“We now have seven renewals out of our goal of 20, a good start,” reported Naomi Craine from Miami Feb. 16. “We’ve also sold a similar number of new subscriptions, most of them going door to door in neighborhoods where we’re visiting previous subscribers.”

On Feb. 15, Craine and Tom Baumann visited Ivette Haiti, a hotel worker and artist originally from Cuba, to pick up her renewal. She was thrilled to see the new Spanish-language translation of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*. “Why should I make myself up like a doll?” she said. “That’s not who I am.”

The book is one of 10 Pathfinder titles on special offer with a renewal or subscription. (See ad below.) Haiti bought a copy of the book as well as *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*.

“We knocked on the door of a former subscriber who wasn’t home,” Craine wrote. “But his next-door neighbor remembered the *Militant* from a previous visit, and this time decided to get a subscription and a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*,” another title on special offer.

“I’ve come across someone who had a

Montenegro protests hit unemployment, gov’t



Hundreds took to the streets Feb. 15 in Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro — a country of 650,000 on the Adriatic Sea adjacent to Bosnia and Herzegovina — protesting high unemployment and demanding the government resign. “We can’t pay our 500 euros electricity bills with 100 euros [monthly] salaries,” protest organizer Ljubo Varagic told Associated Press.

The action comes days after thousands of workers and youth in Bosnia rallied against mass layoffs, unpaid wages and government corruption. “Bosnia has taken to the streets. What are we waiting for?” said organizers of the Montenegro action on their Facebook page. “Tens of thousands of unemployed, hungry and robbed people should take justice into their own hands!”

Montenegro police fired tear gas and stun guns in an effort to disperse the protesters. Twenty demonstrators were detained. Nine cops were injured in the ensuing clashes.

“I think the corporate elite, led by Djukanovic, should end up in prison,” protester Marko Milacic told AP. Milo Djukanovic, now prime minister, has shifted back and forth between prime minister and president for most of the time since the country was forged out of the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

The country’s official unemployment rate is 15 percent, with nearly one-third of those between the ages of 23 and 30 out of work.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Voices from Prison: The Case of the Cuban Five. Sat., March 1. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

FLORIDA

Miami

Stand Your Ground: Why Working People Should Oppose Vigilante Laws. Speaker: Tom Baumann, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 7100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 306A. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Egyptian Workers Continue Fight for Minimum Wage, Unions, Political Rights. Speaker: Betsy Farley, Socialist Workers Party and volunteer at Pathfinder booth at Cairo International Book Fair. Sat., Feb. 22. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. **Why Only the Working Class Can Stop Pollution of the Environment.** Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 806 W. Washington Blvd., Room 202. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

IOWA

Des Moines

The Deepening Crisis of Capitalism and the Road to Workers Power. Speaker: Helen Meyers, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 707-1779.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Egypt: Workers Press Demands as Rulers Seek Stability — Books about Working-Class Struggles Popular at Cairo International Book Fair. Speaker: Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 545 Eighth Ave., Room 1410 (between 37th and 38th St.) Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

CANADA

Montreal

The Legacy of Malcolm X and the Fight Against Racism. Speakers: Beverly Bernardo and François Bradette, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Celebrate Opening of New Militant Labour Forum Hall. Fri., Feb. 28. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m., followed by social. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 188a Onehunga Mall. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

subscription to your paper,” wrote a prisoner in Florida recently. “Could you be kind enough to send me an order form and along with a copy of the *Militant*, so I can subscribe.”

An increasing number of prisoners are reading the *Militant*. Since the drive started four inmates have renewed and two others got new subscriptions. Four

are from Florida, where the *Militant* recently beat back attempts by prison authorities to stop subscribers from receiving the paper.

We have added a prisoners’ quota of eight renewals to the scoreboard.

To renew, get a subscription or join in the drive, contact a distributor listed on page 6 or the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899.

Special offers with ‘Militant’ subscription

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from pages of the ‘Militant’
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by Jack Barnes
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See distributors
on page 6

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by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro; Cuban generals; Gabriel García Márquez
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by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

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by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others
\$3 with subscription (regular \$7)

Los cosméticos, las modas, y la explotación de la mujer
(Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women)
by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, Mary-Alice Waters
\$10 with subscription (regular \$15)

‘Workers should back fight against Russian domination’

Militant Labor Forum discusses protests in Ukraine

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — “Working people in the U.S. and around the world should support the mass struggle for self-determination that is unfolding in Ukraine today,” Tom Fiske, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in Minnesota, said at a Feb. 1 Militant Labor Forum here on the recent anti-government protests in Ukraine.

The demonstrations began in November after Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovich, under pressure from Moscow, declined to sign a trade agreement with the European Union. “Russian President Vladimir Putin put heavy pressure on the Ukraine government — a combination of threats along with the carrot of a \$15 billion loan and lower natural gas prices — in its quest to maintain economic and political control over the country,” said Fiske.

“The protests that erupted were not about disagreements over whether the European Union or Moscow is offering Ukraine a better trade deal,” Fiske said, “but the fight of the masses in Ukraine against Russian domination. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have been taking to the streets against the Yanukovich government and its policies.”

Russian domination of most of what today is Ukraine goes back to the 17th century, Fiske said. The czars banned the Ukrainian language, tried to replace it with Russian, and brought hundreds of thousands of Russians to live there as a counterweight to Ukrainian national aspirations. “Ukraine was typical of Czarist Russia,” he said. “As Vladimir Lenin, central leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, pointed out, the Russian empire was a prison house of nations.”

The socialist revolution that brought working people to power in Russia in 1917 and a few years later in the Ukraine began to throw open those prison doors. “It marked a huge change in development in the Ukraine. Soviets, revolutionary councils, spread throughout the country,” Fiske said.

“The Bolshevik Party and revolutionary government under Lenin’s leadership carried out a policy of Ukrainization to undo the Russification of the Czars, encouraging the teaching of the Ukrainian language and the flowering of Ukrainian national culture,” Fiske said. “The Bolshevik policy was for the right of self-determination, for complete freedom for oppressed nations to be independent.”

“The rise of a privileged caste tied to the government bureaucracy, whose leading representative became Josef Stalin, reversed these gains,” Fiske noted.

While stamping out the national rights of oppressed peoples throughout the former Russian empire, the Soviet Union government under Stalin reimposed the Russification of the Ukraine. Communist leaders in Ukraine were assassinated on the orders of Stalin.

The counterrevolutionary course of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union over decades led to its collapse in 1991, Fiske said. This opened up political space for working people to organize and enter politics with their own struggles and demands. At the same time, an aspiring capitalist class drawn mostly from those with ties to the old government bureaucracy began to accumulate

wealth, largely through theft of state property. New governments adopted a course of reimposing social relations of capitalist exploitation.

The current authoritarian regime of President Putin is run by the remnants of the Stalinist secret police apparatus and represents a major obstacle. Putin himself was a long-time KGB operative who rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel and later headed the Federal Security Service, the KGB’s successor.

While Ukraine won its formal independence in the early ’90s, its government functions much like Moscow’s, using police repression to stifle opposition to its anti-working-class course.

The imperialist governments in the E.U. and the U.S. are no friends of working people in Ukraine, Fiske said. They want the Ukraine government “to stop subsidizing gas and to cut what they see as too high a social wage,” to ensure repayment of loans and maximize profits.

“The struggles for independence from Russian domination in Ukraine is part of the fight to open up political space and prepare the working class for battles to come,” Fiske said. “It will inspire other oppressed nationalities to stand up for their rights against Russian domination in countries of the former Soviet Union, including within Ukraine itself as with the Tatars in the Crimea.”

Ukraine gov’t cracks down on opposition protests



Reuters/Olga Yakimovich

Ukrainian Interior Ministry cops and riot police amass during crack-down on anti-government protesters in Kiev, Ukraine, Feb. 18. At least 26 were killed and hundreds injured in the most violent clashes since thousands took to the streets nearly three months ago to protest economic and political domination of the country by Moscow, backed by Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. Protesters burned down their encampment in Independence Square and the Trade Union building they had occupied, creating barricades of fire as they were forced back.

The clashes erupted hours after the Russian government of President Vladimir Putin pledged another \$2 billion in bailout loans and pushed for a crackdown on protesters, while Yanukovich put off the opposition’s demand to restore the 2004 constitution, which would increase the powers of parliament at the expense of the executive. Yanukovich and Putin announced that the crackdown was launched to thwart a coup by rightist opposition groups. According to news reports, some opposition forces had taken over government buildings in several cities, burning some down and seizing weapons from police and military facilities.

— DOUG NELSON

NKorea initiates family visits with South

BY JOHN STUDER

On the initiative of the North Korean government, reunions of families separated for more than six decades have been set for Feb. 20-25 at the Mt. Kumgang resort in the North. The Korean nation was forcibly divided in 1945 by Washington with the complicity of Moscow.

The family visits, which will involve some 84 Koreans from the South and 88 from the North, will be the first since 2010 and are part of efforts by Pyongyang to improve relations with the South Korean government.

“Foreign forces are wholly to blame for this tragic and disgraceful history of the Korean nation,” a Jan. 27 press release from the North Korean mission to the United Nations said, reporting on a Jan. 16 initiative by Pyongyang to push for “opening a wide avenue for improving north-south relations.”

“It is our determination to create an atmosphere of reconciliation and unity, completely halt hostile military acts, realize the reunion of separated families ... and reenergize multi-faceted north-south cooperation and exchanges,” the statement said.

The initiative by Pyongyang led to talks Feb. 12 to set the visits, the highest-level contact between the two Koreas in seven years.

North Korean representatives at the meeting requested their counterparts postpone until after the family visits two joint military drills by Washington and Seoul. But the U.S. and South Korean governments refused. Secretary of State John Kerry, who flew to Seoul Feb. 13, said it was not “ap-

propriate to link humanitarian issues such as [family] reunification to any other issues.”

The drills include a practice landing by 5,000 U.S. Marines and 3,000 South Korean forces, the largest such operation since 1989.

Pyongyang decided to go ahead with the family visits despite these military exercises aimed at the North. The two sides issued a joint press release Feb. 14 announcing the reunions and agreement to continue efforts to

Continued on page 7

Opposition party found guilty in SKorea political frame-up trial

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a blow to political rights and the right to free speech, South Korean Judge Kim Jung-woon found seven members of the United Progressive Party guilty Feb. 17 on frame-up charges of plotting an insurrection and violating the National Security Law. The charges were made by the National Intelligence Service, South Korea’s central spy agency.

Lee Seok-ki, an elected member of South Korea’s National Assembly, was sentenced to 12 years in prison plus an additional 10-year ban on running for office. Six other party members received sentences ranging from four to seven years. The party won 13 seats in the 300-member assembly.

Lee said the frame-up was a “medieval witch hunt.” The South Korean branch of Amnesty International called the ruling “a violation of the rights to freedom of thought and expression.”

“Lee Seok-ki sought to undermine the legitimacy of the South Korean state and destroy the constitutional order for the purpose of regime change,” the judge ruled. There is no right to a jury trial in South Korea.

The judge’s ruling admits that the

alleged conspiracy “did not reach the stage of a detailed plan.”

The judge also ruled that the seven violated the law by circulating North Korean literature. Prosecutors had asked that Lee be jailed for 20 years.

Lee was only allowed to consult his defense lawyers in the presence of the prosecution and has been blocked from receiving letters or visitors, the Global Research website reported.

The government arrested Lee on Sept. 5, 2013, claiming he headed a secret Revolutionary Organization, had discussed how to sabotage key installations and infrastructure across the South in case of war with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and that Lee spoke in favor of the government in the North.

As evidence, the government presented testimony from an informer and transcripts of May 10 and 12 meetings of the United Progressive Party where Lee spoke. According to South Korea’s *Hankyoreh* daily, the transcript “was altered in 272 places” by the government spy agency.

The United Progressive Party announced plans to appeal the judge’s ruling.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Teamsters in Illinois strike Bay Valley Foods plant

DIXON, Ill. — Nine degree below zero temperatures did not stop 112 workers at Bay Valley Foods here from walking out Feb. 6 against company demands for cuts in pensions and health care. Members of Teamsters Local 722 say the biggest issue in this strike is the company's proposal to stop accepting doctors' notes to excuse absences.

"They say eight absences and you're fired," Bob Crowe, a wraparound operator with 15 years in the Dixon plant, told the *Militant*. "The investors who own the company just keep getting richer and they treat the employees like garbage."

The Teamsters contract ran out Dec. 28. The company has kept the plant open, using nonunion workers and management personnel from other Bay Valley Foods plants to keep it running. Workers are picketing 24 hours a day.

"This is mainly about respect," Joe Baxter, a logistics worker at Bay Valley for 12 years, said. "It's the same story all over the world and it's about time people started standing up. This has been going on too long, these companies just want to take and take."

"The whole community is supporting us," said Gayle Dietmeier, a cleaner in the plant. "We've had teachers, AFSCME workers, and others join our picket line. All kinds of people stop by with tacos, pizzas, food and hot coffee. One person brought \$50 to the gas station on the corner to run a tab for picketers who came in for food and coffee."

One hundred fifty strikers and supporters held a solidarity rally at the Teamsters union hall Feb. 14. Many joined the pickets after the rally, swelling the line to close to 50.

— Betsy Farley

Quebec hotel workers maintain picket line

SAINT-HYACINTHE, Quebec — Some 180 hotel workers have been on strike since Oct. 28, 2012, at the Hotel des Seigneurs hotel and convention center here. Last Dec. 22 SilverBirch Hotels and Resorts, which owns the Saint-Hyacinthe complex, decided to close it down.

The workers, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), continue to picket daily in front of the now-shuttered complex. They are



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Teamsters on strike against Bay Valley Foods in Dixon, Ill., picket plant Feb. 16. Workers walked out 10 days earlier against company demands for cuts in pensions and health care.

fighting to defend their union jobs and contract if the owner sells the facilities.

By a 90 percent margin, workers voted Dec. 19 to reject the company's final offer.

"I've been here six years but I think of those who have been here 20 years," chambermaid Mirta Barboza told the *Militant* Feb. 1 outside the picket trailer. "They deserve their pension and a good retirement."

Mayor Claude Corbeil announced

Jan. 21 that the complex was up for sale. While the future is unclear, the workers continue to fight.

In addition to walking the picket line, the hotel workers are engaged in solidarity activities with other workers on strike or locked out. On Jan. 30, 53 strikers took buses to Abitibi, Quebec, to join with supermarket workers fighting for new contracts at Maxi, Provigo and Loblaws stores in the region.

— John Steele

Supporters of Calif. prisoners demand 'End solitary confinement!'

Continued from front page

ous Security Housing Units known as the SHU.

"My brother has been in solitary for 30 years," Marie Levin said when the microphones were opened for public comments. "Abolish the SHU! It's inhuman! It's torture!"

The hearing, organized by California Senate and Assembly Public Safety Committee chairs Loni Hancock and Tom Ammiano as part of an agreement that led prisoners to end their hunger strike last Sept. 5, focused on new policies enacted by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

George Giurbino, retired director of the CDCR's Division of Adult Institutions, testified in favor of the department's new four-year "Step Down Program," touting it as a pathway for prisoners to get out of the SHU. By going through a program that includes mandated instruction by prison authorities, renouncing gang activity, keeping a journal and not breaking prison rules, he said, prisoners could demonstrate they were no longer a security threat.

By taking these "steps," new CDCR regulations say, inmates could get back into the general prison population "within three to four years."

Prison officials refused to allow four members of the Pelican Bay Short Corridor Human Rights Movement, who helped lead the 60-day hunger strike in 2013, to testify, even by phone.

The four — Todd Ashker; Arturo Castellanos; Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, who is Levin's brother; and Antonio Guillen — wrote a statement that was read at the hearing, calling the new CDCR program "a sham." They said it would continue to put prisoners in isolation indefinitely, based on unverified allegations from informants, or artwork, literature or communications the prison authorities deem gang-related.

"We were willing to starve ourselves to death rather than continue to endure these dehumanizing conditions forever," the statement said.

"California is still unwilling to move to a real behavior-based system where

prisoners are given determinate terms in solitary after due process hearings at which they are found guilty of some serious misconduct," they wrote.

Craig Haney, a University of California professor panelist at the hearing, condemned the use of long-term solitary confinement as torture. "In sheer numbers, in the length of time served, it's shocking," he said. He called the Step Down Program "a step in the right direction that did not go far enough."

Panelist Charles Carbone, a lawyer who has represented prisoners in solitary confinement, argued that the new plan makes the situation of prisoners worse. The Step Down Program has "coercive qualities," he said, including requiring prisoners to keep a journal — open to the authorities — whose contents can be used against them.

The new rules actually expand the category of prisoners who can be thrown into the SHU to include any group of three or more people prison authorities say are a security threat. "With this, the number of people living in isolation will grow," Carbone said.

Many of those who spoke during the public comment period expressed frustration at the lack of progress in getting rid of the SHU. "The CDCR is a law unto themselves," said Constance Pedroza, whose son has been in the SHU for more than 15 years.

Other speakers emphasized the inhumanity of what the prisoners continue to go through — years of being locked in small windowless cells, without seeing the outside world or being able to touch their family members during visits.

Assemblyman Ammiano announced

he was introducing a bill that would put a cap of 36 months on the time someone could be kept in the SHU. The bill would not apply to prisoners whose violations are categorized as "serious" by prison authorities.

Prison officials had slandered the hunger strike as "a ploy of the gangs," former prisoner Steve Czifra told a rally following the hearing. In fact, he said, it was initiatives by the hunger strike leaders that led to a historic agreement for inmates to end hostilities between ethnic groups in the prison, to bring people together across cultural and racial lines.

"The leaders recognized a common bond, they got to know each others' humanity while the state was creating divisions," Czifra said. "We can come together and unite. This is the essence of the struggle."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 10, 1989

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — More than 40 people attended a defense rally here for Mark Curtis on February 18. The featured speaker was Mark Curtis Defense Committee leader Kate Kaku, who is a laid-off packing-house worker in Des Moines, Iowa, and the wife of Mark Curtis.

Curtis is serving 25 years in an Iowa prison, convicted on phony charges of rape and burglary. The defense committee says he is being victimized because of his political and union activities.

Kaku described the kind of political activities Curtis was involved in leading up to his arrest, from supporting the rights of immigrant workers to fighting against cop racism. "What Mark was doing is not unique," stressed Kaku. "It is the kind of political activity that thousands and thousands of vanguard workers around the world are participating in."



March 2, 1964

William Worthy, well-known correspondent for the Baltimore *Afro-American*, scored a notable victory for freedom of travel Feb. 20 when a three-judge federal appeals court in New Orleans threw out his conviction for going to Cuba and returning without a passport. The appeals court declared unconstitutional the federal law which prohibits a citizen from leaving or entering the country without a valid passport.

Worthy was convicted of this charge in August 1962 and was sentenced to three months in jail plus nine months on probation.

His conviction was based on the fact he had gone to Cuba in July 1961 and returned in October of that year without a passport. Worthy was without a passport as a result of his earlier defiance of State Department efforts to curb the right to travel. In 1955 he challenged the ban on travel to China and Hungary by visiting these countries.



March 3, 1939

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 20 — The strike of 550 employees of the Goodrich Rubber plant was successfully terminated today when Local No. 43 of the United Rubber Workers Union obtained the approval of the rank and file to an agreement maintaining the 30-hour week and the four six-hour shifts in the 24-hour production departments of the plant.

The strike beginning Jan. 30 and lasting 20 days was called when management declared plans to change the number of shifts in the production departments which operate twenty-four hours a day to three shifts instead of the four six-hour shifts, indicating a move to return to the eight hour day.

The agreement signed is effective until October 31 and provides for the settlement of further grievances or complaints concerning temporary changes in the hours of labor by meetings between the union committees and the management.

Trade unions and workers' road to socialist revolution

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay by *Leon Trotsky* is one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for February. Trotsky was a central leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Beginning in the late 1920s he also led the fight to rebuild a world communist movement in face of a counterrevolution in the Soviet Union led by Josef Stalin. Excerpted below is an introduction to Trotsky's articles by Farrell Dobbs, a central leader of the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Minneapolis Teamsters union in the 1930s, and until his death in 1983, of the Socialist Workers Party. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FARRELL DOBBS

As a Marxist, Leon Trotsky of course was deeply concerned with all the problems relating to the revolutionary mobilization of the working class, and he followed with interest changes in the trade unions of various countries and the problems of strategy and tactics that these changes presented for revolutionists. In fact at the time of his death in 1940 he was working on such questions in the piece "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay."

This article, which is must reading for every Marxist, whether or not he is active in the unions, is one of the most brilliant and prophetic Trotsky ever wrote.



Farrell Dobbs, left, visits Mexico to meet with Leon Trotsky, exiled leader of Russian Revolution, to discuss world politics and communist trade union policies in January 1940, after Dobbs resigned from Teamsters union staff to become Socialist Workers Party national labor secretary.

Far-ranging, pointing to the conditions that were common to unions all over the world at the start of World War II, it penetrates to the central question of unionism in our time: the need for "complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state." It is indeed a pity that Trotsky did not live to complete this article, but there is more food for thought (and action) in this short unfinished piece than will be found in any book by anyone else on the union question.

The second article is about "The Question of Trade Union Unity" as it presented itself to the French Left Oppositionists in 1931, when the unions were divided into two rival labor federations. But Trotsky's treatment of this recurring problem transcends the particular situation that led him to write it and offers guidelines for handling it even today.

"We make no fetish of trade union unity," he wrote. "It is not a question for us of a panacea." But at the same time, he stressed, "a preference for an assured majority in a narrow and isolated trade union confederation rather than oppositional work in a broad and real mass organization, is the mark only of sectarians or officials and not of proletarian revolutionists." He did not advocate trade union unity at all times and under all conditions, but he pointed out its advantages under most conditions for the working class as a whole and for the

revolutionists in particular.

The third article, here entitled "The Unions in Britain," was written in 1933 after Hitler's coming to power had revealed the bankruptcy of the Communist International (Comintern). The Left Opposition had decided to discontinue its efforts to reform the Comintern and its parties and to work for the creation of a new International. In line with this, the Left Opposition participated in an international conference of left socialist and independent communist organizations held in Paris August 27–28, 1933, where it introduced a resolution advocating a new International. One of the centrist organizations at the conference, the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain, took an intermediate position on this question because it was still suffering from illusions about the possibility of reforming the Comintern — illusions that were partly the result of ignorance about the history of Stalinism.

In this article, written shortly after the Paris conference, Trotsky undertook the task of educating the members of the ILP not only about the disastrous policies of the Stalinists in the union sphere in Britain and elsewhere, but also about the role of genuine revolutionists in combating the union bureaucracy. Among other questions, he deals here with one that has still not died: Is it not possible to skip over the trade union stage?

The fourth article consists of excerpts from letters in 1936, 1937, and 1938

criticizing the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (RSAP) of Holland, which had adhered to the movement for a new International at the Paris conference in 1933, but which developed a number of serious differences in the following years and withdrew from the movement before the Fourth International was founded in 1938.

The differences covered a broad range of questions — the civil war in Spain, the nature and internal life of the Fourth International, and others. But they also concerned the RSAP's union policy, which was concentrated on a small independent grouping, the National Labor Secretariat (NAS), in which RSAP leader Henk Sneevliet played a leading role, but which remained outside of the mainstream of the Dutch labor movement.

The fifth article is taken from the main document adopted at the founding conference of the Fourth International, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International." It repeats the need for revolutionists to work inside the existing unions and condemns "sectarian attempts to build or preserve small 'revolutionary' unions" as "the renouncing of the struggle for leadership of the working class." But it also rejects "trade union fetishism, equally characteristic of trade unionists and syndicalists." It advocates a struggle not only to replace the conservative union bureaucracy but also to create wherever possible independent militant organizations better suited to mass anticapitalist struggle; and, if necessary, "not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn one's back on mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian fictions, it is no less so to passively tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative ('progressive') bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution."

The final article in part 1 is the product of a conversation Trotsky had with a CIO organizer in Mexico in September 1938, shortly after the founding of the Fourth International.

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Montreal Cuban 5 exhibit

Continued from front page

commit espionage, and imprisoned in the U.S. (See “Who Are the Cuban Five?” below.) The program, entitled “Art and Liberation,” was organized by the Fabio Di Celmo Committee for the Five, with the support of the Quebec Association for the Teaching of History and Geography.

Catinca Adriana Stan, a lecturer in the teaching of history, opened by describing Guerrero’s paintings, copies of which were hung around the room.

Showings of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*



Exhibits Minneapolis February 4-28

Regla de Oro — Art Gallery and Fair Trade Gifts, 2743 Lyndale Ave. S. Tel.: (612) 866-1247; (612) 378-7134. Schedule: Tues.-Fri., 12PM-7PM; Sat., 11AM-7PM; Sun., 11AM-4PM.

Los Angeles March 2-30

Opening reception: Sun., March 2, 2PM. Coffee and Crepes, 4545 Cesar Chavez Ave. Tel.: (323) 263-4544; (323) 661-1980. Exhibition schedule: Tues.-Thurs., 10AM-4PM; Fri.-Sat., 12PM-8PM.

Chicago March 21-April 13

Opening reception: Sat., March 22, 7-9PM. Beverly Arts Center, 2407 W. 111th St. Tel.: (773) 445-3838. Exhibition schedule: Mon.-Fri., 9AM-9PM (closes at 5 p.m. if no evening event); Sat., 12PM-5PM.; Sun., 1-4PM.

Philadelphia Fri., March 21

Reception: 7 p.m. Exhibition: 7-9 p.m. Imperfect Gallery, 5601 Greene St. (Germantown) Tel.: (917) 957-4504, imperfectgallery.com

The watercolor images illustrate the conditions faced by the five revolutionaries in the 17 months they were held in solitary at the Miami Federal Detention Center before and during their trial. The paintings depict both the harassment and brutality they faced from prison guards and officials as well as the ways they and other inmates were able to communicate and share solidarity with each other.

Describing the growing international movement to press for the release of the Five, Alain González González, Cuba’s consul in Montreal, said, “Cuba calls on youth worldwide to join in organizing to end this injustice.”

“It is an honor to be part of this act of solidarity,” said Claude Morin, a retired professor at the University of Montreal specializing in Cuban history. Cuba is “a small country, but a giant” in its acts of international solidarity, he said, describing how the Cuban Revolution had provided solidarity to other countries, from Africa to Latin America.

“Since 2007 I have been interested in helping to get out the word about the Cuban Five,” Lisa Courtemanche, from the International Solidarity Committee of the Montreal Labor Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), said. She learned about solidarity activity with the Cuban Revolution after the union at the Quebec Liquor Board where she worked affiliated to the CSN.

“We know that right is on our side, but to win we need a jury of millions throughout the world to make our truth known,” Félix Vincent Ardea, a philosophy student who took part in protests against tuition hikes in 2012, said, quoting Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five.

“I came because people should learn about what’s happening outside their homes, because in that way they’ll truly learn about the unfairness around us,” Gee, a 20-year-old chemistry student from the Congo, told the *Militant*. “We each need to act to get more people involved.”

Thousands pour into Havana Int’l Book Fair



Militant photos by Jonathan Silberman

HAVANA — Tens of thousands — adults, youth and children — have been thronging to the international book fair here to seek out some of the 700 new titles available at the nationwide cultural event, which opened Feb. 13. After 10 days in the capital city, the fair will travel to each of the 15 provincial capitals, concluding March 9 in the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba. The culture of reading has marked Cuba’s working people since the early years of Cuba’s socialist revolution.

One feature event during the first days of the fair was a packed Feb. 16 launching of *Antes de que se me olvide* (Before I forget), a book-length interview with Venezuelan leader Alí Rodríguez by Cuban journalist Rosa Miriam Elizalde. Rodríguez held important responsibilities in the government of Hugo Chávez, including minister of energy and oil, foreign minister and ambassador to Cuba. He is currently general secretary of UNASUR, a Latin American trade alliance. In the 1960s and ’70s he was a leader of one of the groups, a split-off of the Venezuelan Communist Party, that engaged in a guerrilla war against the government.

Speaking on the panel (bottom photo, from left) were Julio Chirino, Venezuela’s consul in Havana; Rodríguez; Elizalde; and Zuleica Romay, president of the Cuban Book Institute.

— JONATHAN SILBERMAN AND PAUL PRENDERGAST

Who are the Cuban Five?



Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with “conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information.”

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shutdown of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

The frame-up and continued incarceration of the Five is part of Washington’s decades-long campaign to punish the working people of Cuba for making and defending their socialist revolution.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013, halfway through his parole.

NKorea

Continued from page 4

“promote mutual understanding and trust.”

The same day, the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. sent revolutionary greetings to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, welcoming the initiative by Pyongyang and condemning Washington’s refusal to postpone military drills.

“We reaffirm our commitment to the fight for Korea’s national reunification and withdrawal of all U.S. troops, aircraft, ships, and conventional and nuclear arms from Korea, its air and waters,” said the statement by Steve Clark on behalf of the SWP National Committee.

The firmest support for the Korean people’s fight for national reunification will be won among those resisting what “crisis-ridden world capitalism offers workers and farmers the world over today,” the SWP statement said. “Korea is one!”

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‘Socialism on Trial’ – A clear presentation of Cannon’s 1941 testimony ‘lays out course of communist politics and propaganda necessary for

A new, expanded edition of *Socialism on Trial* is being published by Pathfinder Press this spring. It will include a new preface by Steve Clark, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, and the introduction from the 1944 edition by Joseph Hansen, a longtime central leader of the party until his death in 1979. Also added are numerous photos and illustrations along with a glossary of names and events to aid the reader. Advance copies were produced in Spanish for presentation at the Havana International Book Fair in February. Printed below is the preface by Clark. Starting on the facing page is the introduction by Hansen. Copyright © 2014 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY STEVE CLARK

Socialism on Trial presents the full testimony by James P. Cannon given from the witness stand of a federal courtroom in Minneapolis over three days in November 1941.

Cannon was national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. He was also one of eighteen communist and Teamster leaders framed up and convicted that year on federal “conspiracy” charges under the thought-control Smith Act. That new club against workers organizations, making it illegal “to teach, advocate and encourage” revolutionary ideas, had been adopted by Congress and signed into law by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1940.

Roosevelt had a weighty “political reason for initiating prosecution,” wrote Joseph Hansen in his introduction to *Socialism on Trial*. “The administration, expecting momentarily to plunge the United States into the catastrophe of World War II, wished to isolate and silence the advocates of socialism so that their ideas might be prevented from gaining a hearing among the masses driven into the slaughter.”

In this expanded edition, we are including the 1944 introduction by Hansen, who was thirty-three at the time.

Hansen was for several decades a central leader of the Socialist Workers Party, serving as editor of the *Militant* newsweekly and other publications until his death in 1979. His introduction tells the story of the Smith Act frame-up that led to the Minneapolis trial, as well as the broad political fight against it initiated and organized by the SWP in the labor movement and among other supporters of civil liberties guaranteed by the US Constitution.

“Never before in a labor trial in this country,” Hansen writes, “have defendants so unswervingly, so consciously, and so systematically defended their revolutionary program, utilizing the courtroom as a forum from which to proclaim it.”

That is what readers will find in Cannon’s testimony — a clear and forthright presentation of the communist program of the fighting vanguard of the working class.

On November 30, 1941, at the end of the twenty-three-day-long trial, the jury handed down its verdicts. Eighteen of the twenty-eight defendants, spanning the ages of twenty five to nearly sixty, were convicted. In mid-February 1944, as Hansen was completing the introduction, they had already spent a month and half in prison, jailed since New Year’s Eve.



In preparation for Washington’s entry in World War II, Roosevelt administration launched frame-up against leaders of Teamsters Local 544 and Socialist Workers Party “to isolate and silence advocates of socialism and prevent them from gaining a hearing among the masses driven into the slaughter,” writes Joseph Hansen. **Top**, June 28, 1941, issue of *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* announces raid of SWP headquarters in Minneapolis, bottom right. **Bottom left**, *New York Times* sensationalized article on indictment of 29 defendants on trumped-up “conspiracy” charges two weeks later.

The six defendants who were given one-year terms served ten months and were released in October 1944. The remaining twelve, each sentenced to sixteen months, served a few days less than thirteen before walking out of prison on January 24, 1945.

A new Spanish edition of *Socialism on Trial*, published earlier this year makes available, for the first time ever in that language, “Communist Policy in the Minneapolis Trial: James P. Cannon Answers His Ultraleft Critics.” Originally published in English in the United States in 1942, it contains a sweeping criticism of the Socialist Workers Party leadership by Grandizo Munis, as well as Cannon’s response. Munis was a revolutionary socialist living in Mexico at the time, in exile from his native Spain since the defeat of republican forces there by Francisco Franco’s fascist movement in the late 1930s.

“Cannon discusses how revolutionaries defend themselves against attacks, inside the courtroom and outside,” writes George Novack in the introductory note to this exchange. Novack served as national secretary of the Civil Rights Defense Committee, which organized the defense campaign that reached out to unionists, Black rights organizations, farmers and farmworkers, and others to combat the frame-up and then to demand freedom and a pardon for the eighteen.

The communist policy carried out by the SWP leadership, Cannon writes in his answer to Munis, was an effective and uncompromising re-

sponse to US government efforts “designed to outlaw the party and deprive it, perhaps for a long time, of the active services of a number of its most experienced leaders.”

But the response to Munis represents something much more than that, Cannon says. It lays out the course of communist politics and propaganda that is necessary “for the mobilization of the workers for mass action throughout all stages of the development of the proletarian revolution in the United States.”

January 2014



Fifteen defendants convicted under thought-control Party headquarters in Minneapolis. From left, Vince

Want to read more?....

Socialism on Trial

James P. Cannon was the lead defendant in the Minneapolis sedition trial of 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the labor movement who were framed up and jailed in 1941 for conspiracy to advocate the overthrow of the US government. In his testimony to the court Cannon presents the communist program of the fighting vanguard of the working class. **\$16**

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The unbending dignity and integrity of the Cuban Five has won them the respect of thousands around the world as well as fellow prisoners. Here three who have known them behind bars speak out. Also accounts of prison life and resistance by Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Elizabeth Palmeiro and Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda. Also in Spanish.

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‘I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived’

Fifteen watercolors by Antonio Guerrero for the 15th anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban Five. With text by Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino. Also in Spanish. **\$7. Special publication offer \$5**

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US gov't wanted to silence labor opponents of imperialist war

BY JOSEPH HANSEN

Since publication of the first edition of *Socialism on Trial* [in 1942], the eighteen defendants in the famous Minneapolis "sedition" trial have been imprisoned. Fourteen are now at Sandstone penitentiary in Minnesota, three at Danbury, Connecticut, and one at the federal prison for women, Alderson, West Virginia. Prison gates closed on these socialists and trade unionists in "democratic" America despite the fact they were guilty of no crime other than exercising their right to free speech.

They were incarcerated because they opposed imperialist war, and because they advocated building a socialist society as the only means of ending such wars and all the other evils of capitalism in its death agony. The views for which they now sit behind bars are presented in this book, which is a reprint of the official court record of the testimony of James P. Cannon, America's No. 1 Socialist and principal defendant at the trial.

Although the Minneapolis case was the first peacetime federal prosecution for sedition in the history of the United States, it was clearly engineered by the Roosevelt administration as part of its war program. The facts prove this beyond honest dispute.

In the spring of 1941, Daniel J. Tobin, head of the Teamsters International and one of the political hatchet men of the Roosevelt regime, came into conflict with the leaders of Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544. In May 1941 Tobin published a bitter attack in his personal organ, the *Teamsters Journal*, denouncing the Trotskyists in the Minnesota Teamsters' movement. Shortly thereafter, he ordered the democratically elected leadership of Local 544 to stand trial before his International Executive Board in Washington the first week of June. When the leaders of Local 544 refused to concede to his appointment of a receiver over the union with absolute powers, including the power to expel anyone, Tobin proceeded to move in on the union — all this because the

Trotskyists in the union refused to abandon their vigorous struggle to improve working conditions or to give political support to Roosevelt in the then rapidly approaching entry of the United States into the second World War.

As a result of Tobin's actions, 4,000 members of Local 544 at a regular membership meeting on June 9 voted virtually unanimously to disaffiliate from Tobin's organization in the AFL [American Federation of Labor] and to accept a charter from the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations].

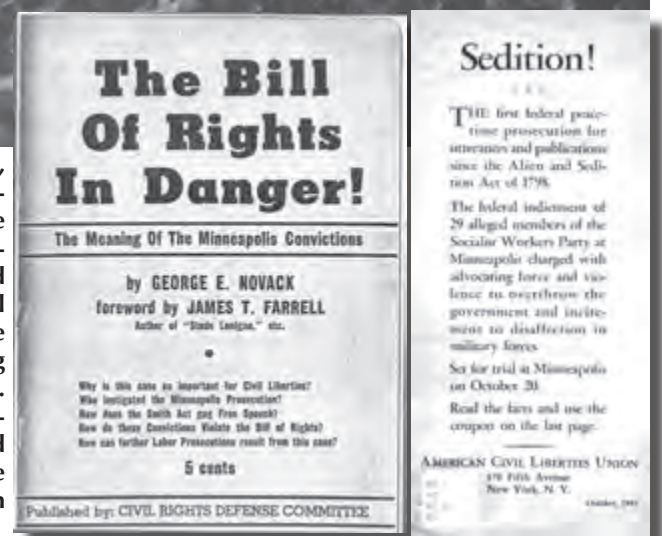
Tobin lost no time. Four days after the vote of Local 544, on June 13, Roosevelt's secretary, Stephen Early, told the White House press conference, as reported in the *New York Times* of June 14, 1941, that Tobin had complained to Roosevelt by telegram from Indianapolis, and that: "*When I advised the President of Tobin's representations this morning he asked me to immediately have the government departments and agencies interested in this matter notified...*"

In addition to granting Tobin a personal favor, Roosevelt had a much weightier political reason for initiating prosecution. The administration, expecting momentarily to plunge the United States into the catastrophe of World War II, wished to isolate and silence the advocates of socialism so that their ideas might be prevented from gaining a hearing among the masses driven into the slaughter.

Swift action followed the White House assurance to Tobin. Just thirteen days later, on June 27, 1941, FBI agents raided the branch headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party in St. Paul and Minneapolis, carting off large quanti-



With backing from labor, civil libertarians and others, Civil Rights Defense Committee launched public campaign to demand freedom for 18 and repeal of Smith Act. **Above**, some 800 attend mass meeting in New York, June 1944. **Right**, examples of literature defending 18 published by Civil Rights Defense Committee and American Civil Liberties Union.



ties of Marxist literature, much of which could have been obtained in any public library.

On July 15, 1941, less than a month later, an indictment drawn up by the Department of Justice was handed down by a federal grand jury against twenty-nine men and women.

Count one of the indictment, based on an 1861 statute passed during the Civil War against the Southern slaveholders, charged a "conspiracy to overthrow the government by force and violence."

Count two of the indictment charged: (1) Advocating overthrow of the government by force; (2) Publishing and circulating literature advocating this; (3) Forming organizations "to teach, advocate and encourage" such overthrow; (4) Becoming members of such organizations; (5) Distributing publications which "advised, counseled and urged" insubordination in the armed forces. This count was based wholly on the Smith "Omnibus Gag" Act, invoked for the first time in the Minneapolis case.

Like the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 the Smith Act makes the mere advocacy of ideas a federal crime. Its constitutionality has been challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, and numerous others. The sponsor of this ultrareactionary law is poll-tax Representative Howard W. Smith, leader of the antilabor bloc in Congress and coauthor of the vicious Smith-Connally antistrike law.

On October 27, 1941, the trial began in the Federal District Court at Minneapolis. The principal government "evidence" consisted of innumerable quotations from articles in the Ameri-

can Trotskyist press going back to 1929. Public writings, public addresses of the defendants, radio speeches, leaflets distributed by tens of thousands — these were the main government proofs of "conspiracy."

The government further introduced as evidence photographs of the great teachers of Marxism (including a portrait of Daniel DeLeon). It introduced such leaflets as the one advertising Vincent Raymond Dunne as speaker at a public forum on the action of the Trotskyists in combatting "20,000 Fascists in Madison Square." In the indictment and in the prosecution arguments, the government flatly characterized as criminal the doctrines of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky.

This infamous attack was met unflinchingly by the proletarian defense. Never before in a labor trial in this country have defendants so unswervingly, so consciously and so systematically defended their revolutionary program, utilizing the courtroom as a forum from

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Smith Act walk to Hennepin County jail Dec. 31, 1943, after leaving together from Socialist Workers Vincent R. Dunne, Oscar Coover Sr., James P. Cannon. At Cannon's left is U.S. deputy marshal.

The 18 convicted labor and socialist leaders

Vincent R. Dunne	James P. Cannon
Oscar Coover Sr.	Carl Skoglund
Albert Goldman	Farrell Dobbs
Felix Morrow	Grace Carlson
Carlos Hudson	Max Geldman
Harry DeBoer	Emil Hansen
Clarence Hamel	Ed Palmquist
Jake Cooper	Karl Kuehn
Alfred Russell	Oscar Schoenfeld

‘Socialism on Trial’

Continued from page 9
which to proclaim it. The conduct of the defendants at the trial and throughout all the subsequent stages of the case belongs to the best traditions of international Marxism.

The jury returned a verdict of not guilty on the first count of the indictment, thereby revealing the utter flimsiness of the government case. On the second count, involving a new law, the constitutionality of which had not yet been tested, the jury returned a verdict of guilty against eighteen of the defendants. Of the remaining defendants, five were released by a directed verdict of the court; five others were acquitted by the jury. Grant Dunne, Local 544 organizer and one of the original twenty-nine defendants, committed suicide three weeks before the trial began. He had suffered ill health for a long time from shell shock incurred during the first World War.

The Civil Rights Defense Committee, handling the case in close collaboration with the American Civil Liberties Union and with the support of labor and defense organizations, assisted the eighteen in appealing their conviction to the Eighth US Circuit Court of Appeals.

Meanwhile Tobin had instigated proceedings against the Secretary-Treasurer of Local 544, Kelly Postal. When the Minnesota Teamsters voted to accept the CIO charter, they likewise voted unanimously to turn \$5,000 in the local treasury over to the Union Defense Committee. Kelly Postal turned over the funds as instructed. Brought before one court on a charge of grand larceny, Postal was vindicated when the judge threw the case out of court. But the wheels of capitalist justice did not stop because one judge could not overlook the rawness of the frame-up. Hailed before Judge Selover, Postal was declared guilty and sentenced up to five years in Stillwater penitentiary. Judge Selover, who pronounced this cruel sentence, turned down a motion to appeal the case. Kelly Postal is now behind bars because he obeyed the will of the union membership which placed him in office.

On September 20, 1943, the Eighth Circuit Court handed down its decision. In defiance of the law, the Constitution, and all the principles and traditions of democracy, this court upheld the Smith “Gag” Act, giving unconditional endorsement to the prosecution.

The defendants, deprived of their elementary democratic rights, were being railroaded to prison. The circuit court judges declared that all this was done in a correct legal way. Thus did the Court of Appeals uphold the right of free speech, one of the “four freedoms” which Roosevelt has solemnly promised to export to other countries.

The Civil Rights Defense Committee then carried the case to the United States Supreme Court. What did this august body, composed almost entirely of Roosevelt appointees do? Did they safeguard the inviolability of the Bill of Rights? Or did they act like the “government departments and agencies interested in this matter” whom Roosevelt’s secretary, Stephen Early, notified upon receipt of Tobin’s complaint?

On November 22, 1943, barely more than two months after the appeal was made, the Supreme Court handed down its decision. *It denied the petition of the eighteen to hear their appeal.*

This decision will undoubtedly go down as historic. Here is a peacetime law, manifestly unconstitutional, a law directly abrogating the right of free speech. The case is the first to be tried under this law. The President who appointed the judges is waging a war ostensibly to make the world free for democracy. The law has been universally denounced — even in the halls of Congress — as “enough to make Thomas Jefferson turn over in his grave” and as “without precedent in the history of labor legislation.” Yet the last court of appeal denies — without a word of explanation — the petition of eighteen defendants to hear their case!

It is impossible to brush this reactionary decision aside as “accidental.” Twice more, the Civil Liberties Union petitioned the Supreme Court to hear this important case. Twice more, the Supreme Court denied the petition without explanation.

In the words of the great socialist agitator, Eugene V. Debs, who was imprisoned in the last war, “It is extremely dangerous to exercise the constitutional rights of free speech in a country fighting to make democracy safe in the world.”

On December 31, 1943, headed by James P. Cannon and Vincent R. Dunne, fifteen of the defendants formed ranks



at the Minneapolis branch headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party and marched in a body through the crowded streets of the city to the Federal Court House. There they were received by the United States Marshal. On the same day the other three defendants appeared at the Marshal’s office in New York. New Year’s Day, 1944, the defendants began their transfer from the local jails to the federal prisons.

The flagrant injustice of this imprisonment aroused indignation throughout wide circles. Many newspapers and partisans of civil rights and liberties protested the action of the Supreme Court. Declared the American Civil Liberties Union, “This is a case which should never have been brought to court under a law which should never have been passed. Never before has the Supreme Court refused to review a case of this importance.”

Recognizing the vital importance of the Minneapolis case to the entire labor movement and the cause of civil liberties, more than 135 unions have already given support or contributed to the work of the Civil Rights Defense Committee. Among them are the United Transport Service Employees — CIO, the New Jersey State CIO Council, the St. Louis Joint Council CIO, the San Francisco Industrial Union Council, forty UAW-CIO locals, eleven United Steel Workers locals, seven United Rubber Workers locals together with dozens of other CIO, AFL, and independent unions.

The present campaign of the Civil Rights Defense Committee to obtain unconditional presidential pardon for the eighteen has met with encouraging response. The alarm of thinking workers over this case is well justified. The imprisonment of the eighteen sets a dangerous precedent which threatens the freedom of every trade unionist and of every American who may disagree with the policies of the Roosevelt administration. The upholding of the Smith “Gag” Law now makes it a crime to exercise the right of free speech and creates a weapon which can be used to deprive other trade

unionists and working class political parties of their democratic rights.

Socialism on Trial has already proved its popularity. The first edition, published in 1942, has been sold out completely. It not only occupies a place on the shelves of advanced workers throughout the United States but has been made available to British workers through two editions printed in Great Britain. In Latin America, where workers long aware of Wall Street’s role in world politics are keenly interested in obtaining allies among American workers in the common struggle, the booklet has been read avidly. In the Middle East a translation into Arabic is projected.

The form of the contents, of course, was bound to prove attractive. Here is the unrehearsed, unretouched battle between the prosecuting attorney and the chief defendant. Here are the penetrating questions of the defense attorney, Albert Goldman, himself a defendant, as he attempts to make plain what the Trotskyists actually believe, despite constant efforts of the prosecution to create obstacles, becloud the issues, trap the defendant. But the mere form alone is not sufficient to account for the absorbing interest of *Socialism on Trial*. More important is the fact that here is presented the revolutionary program that discloses the only road out of the accumulating horrors of capitalist society in its death agony.

From the courtroom in Minneapolis where the Roosevelt Administration hounded leading representatives of the society of the future has come a remarkable document that will undoubtedly prove a powerful instrument in the difficult struggle to build that coming society of peace and plenty. Just as in World War I the imprisonment of Eugene V. Debs succeeded only in further spreading and popularizing socialism, so in World War II the imprisonment of the Minneapolis defendants will succeed only in hastening the day of the final victory.

Debs spoke prophetically when he said: “They may put those men in jail — and some of the rest of us in jail — but they cannot put the socialist movement in jail.”

February 15, 1944



Political frame-ups and government efforts to disrupt Socialist Workers Party never succeeded in deterring its work. “They may put those men in jail — and some of the rest of us in jail — but they cannot put the socialist movement in jail,” wrote Hansen, quoting from socialist leader Eugene V. Debs. **Above**, SWP member Osborne Hart, right, sells subscription to miner Jason Hager, in Danville, W.Va., May 2013.

End solitary confinement!

Throwing workers into tiny, windowless cells, keeping them there 23 hours a day, denying them contact visits with relatives and friends, regulating what they can read and do, these conditions in the solitary confinement cells in prisons all across the U.S. are not just violations of basic rights. They are an affront to human dignity.

These barbaric methods are used in an effort to break prisoners’ morale, to demoralize them and destroy their spirit. Often the only way out is to become a cop toady and snitch on fellow inmates.

Solitary confinement is routinely employed against political prisoners. The Cuban Five, five Cuban revolutionaries framed up in 1998 for tracking the activities of paramilitary groups in Miami with a long history of armed assaults and acts of sabotage against Cuba, were thrown in solitary for 17 months before their trial. The efforts to force them to their knees, to get them to deny the justice of their efforts to defend the Cuban Revolution and accept a “plea bargain” ut-

terly failed.

The authorities fear the example of integrity, courage and dignity these fighters represent to working people, behind and outside prison walls.

The propertied rulers have the same attitude toward all workers. The deepening crisis of their capitalist system is driving them to more far-reaching and harsher attacks on the working class worldwide. As they push relentlessly harder, their repressive methods will become more brazen and increasingly driven by fear of the day, the inevitable day, when workers will rise up against them.

To the propertied rulers, the working class is a criminal class, and the treatment meted out in their prisons is increasingly mirrored in their treatment of us as a whole. They live behind taller and taller gates while they chip away at our political rights, build up their cops and expand their criminal “justice” system.

Join the fight to stop solitary confinement!

‘Productivity’ up, real wages down

Continued from front page
recession,” the *Journal* said.

In fact, workers take-home wages have been falling for some 40 years, as a decline in the average rate of industrial profits spurred bosses to push against workers’ pay. Average real take-home pay of workers today is below the level of the mid-1970s, and this trend toward lowering of wages has accelerated over the past five years. Since the recession ended in June 2009, average real wages for auto workers have declined 10 percent; for all manufacturing workers they’ve dropped 2.4 percent.

Bosses have succeeded in implementing two-tier contracts, like those in effect in auto plants and in more and more other factories, where newer workers do the same jobs as those with more seniority but at half the pay.

Increasing numbers of workers are forced to work on temporary contracts, with lower wages and no benefits, or to work part time. Since 2009, the number working through temp agencies has doubled to a record high of some 2.7 million.

Since the 1970s the bosses’ “productivity” drive — making workers toil harder at the expense of life and limb — has risen annually, but not workers’ pay.

In 1973, workers’ wages as a percentage of the gross domestic product was 66 percent. By 2012 it had dropped to 58 percent, the lowest since the end of World War II.

In the mid-1970s “real wages suddenly flat-lined in the face of rising productivity,” investment ana-

lyst John Mauldin wrote in his Feb. 9 newsletter.

While employed workers are finding it hard to get a real pay raise — or one not eaten up by increased health premiums — those unemployed are finding it harder to get hired.

“More than one in six men ages of 25 to 54, prime working years, don’t have jobs,” reported the *Journal*, “a total of 10.4 million.” More than two-thirds of them are labeled by government statisticians as “discouraged,” and not counted as unemployed.

The number of male workers without jobs aged 25 to 54 was 6 percent in the early 1970s, 13 percent by late 2007, and 17 percent at the end of 2013.

The fight to raise workers’ wages is tied into the struggle to substantially raise the minimum wage. Wages under capitalism are set from the bottom up. When the bosses are able to hold down the minimum wage, it drags down the wages of all.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 3.6 million workers were paid at or below the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour in 2012. In 2013 dollars, today’s minimum wage is one-third less than it was in 1968.

If the minimum wage rate had gone up at the same pace as productivity gains the bosses made on workers’ backs, today it would be \$18.28 an hour.

As social pressure mounts, President Barack Obama and other Democratic Party politicians are proposing a paltry raise in the federal minimum wage to \$10.10.

LETTERS

Liked regulatory state article

Thank you for that stunning article on the regulatory state, finally putting the lie to the constant assertion by the capitalist media that “Socialism=Big Government.”

My concern is with the recent Boeing concession contract. The threat by the bosses to move everything somewhere else if they don’t get what they want is a devastating prospect for working folks. Can you please draw for readers a possible scenario in which we, the working class, win in a fight like that?

Doug Kihn
Los Angeles, Calif.

Requests another subscription

Your newspaper is the only one that I read. I do not read those of the mainstream media, because I doubt the veracity of their publications. I have always looked forward to re-

ceiving your issues. I have always received the paper without censorship. Please, may I request another subscription.

A prisoner
California

‘No struggle, no progress’

I initially subscribed a year ago. You offer important national as well as international news to those interested in knowing what’s taking place, especially to individuals who like myself find themselves

trapped in certain unfortunate circumstances where those so-called “Correctional Officers” seem to do everything possible to deprive the incarcerated of his/her right to education, freedom of the press and intellectual progress. I always share it with other prisoners. I personally understand the huge importance of knowledge, self-respect, determination, perseverance, unity and self-worth. Where there is no struggle, there will never be any progress.

A prisoner
Florida

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Puerto Rico

Continued from front page

ing of Puerto Rico debt to “junk” Feb. 4, rapidly followed by Moody’s. As a result, the interest owed on Puerto Rico’s \$70 billion debt is increasing and Gov. Alejandro García Padilla will have to come up with \$940 million in payments ahead of schedule. Interest on the bonds has reached 10 percent.

The debt of Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony since 1898, is greater than the value of the country’s gross annual production. Debt-service payments equal about 15 percent of the government’s budget.

In essence, the government keeps borrowing more just to pay off what it has already borrowed.

The roughly \$4.5 billion in debt service is double Puerto Rico’s annual capital works budget. That means billions leaves the island “to pay bondholders and creditors without creating a single job or contributing a dime to economic development,” notes *Caribbean Business* weekly in its Feb. 13 issue.

Since taking over last year, García Padilla has sought to “stabilize” the economy on the backs of workers. He cut pensions for government workers, reduced the size of the government workforce, raised the retirement age, raised water rates by 60 percent and increased sales and gasoline taxes. At the same time, he has offered special tax exemptions to capitalists who decide to make the island their home.

“We don’t have enough personnel even to monitor the electric metering for big commercial customers,” Roberto García Cooper, an electrician for the state-run electric company, said by phone from Guaynabo Feb. 18. “When people retire, the company doesn’t replace them. But the constitution says that the bondholders get paid first before anyone else.”

‘Root of problem is colonialism’

“The root of the problem is colonialism,” longtime independence leader Rafael Cancel Miranda told the *Militant* by phone Feb. 17. “It’s a cancer. You can’t solve it by treating the symptoms.”

“U.S. imperialism wiped out our agriculture. We used to produce 75 percent of what we consumed, now we have to import 85 percent,” Cancel Miranda said.

He was referring to Operation Bootstrap, a U.S.-promoted “development plan” that combined tax breaks and other incentives for U.S. bosses to expand clothing and pharmaceutical plants, drawing workers off the land. As a result, the island’s agricultural workforce fell from 36 percent in 1950 to 4.8 percent in 1980. Thousands of acres of prime farming land were left idle.

Today those policies, combined with the worldwide capitalist economic crisis, have made one-third of the island’s population dependent on food stamps, used to pay for food imported from the U.S. The island’s real gross national product has declined every year since 2006 except for a 0.1 percent increase in 2012.

According to the Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics, the island has had a net loss of 54,000 people a year in 2011 and 2012. There are now more Puerto Ricans living in the United States than on the island.

Nearly 320,000 homes on the island were vacant in 2012, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, up from 186,000 in 2005.

Even as the social crisis in Puerto Rico gets worse, some bondholders see greater opportunity for speculative investment, betting that no matter how high interest rates go, Puerto Rico will pay. By U.S. law the island can’t declare bankruptcy.

“I have not seen this level of enthusiasm for Puerto Rico’s paper in years,” *Financial Times* reporter John Dizard wrote Feb. 14. “The prospects for the issue’s success look very good ... since it will be priced and sized to fly off the shelves.” To get in on the action, all you need is a minimum \$50 million to invest.

— CALENDAR —

GEORGIA

Atlanta
Reclaim Our Voice for Reproductive Justice in Georgia: Walk in My Shoes, Hear Our Voice. Tues., Feb. 25, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Georgia State Building. Tel.: (404) 248-5445.